

FY 2017 Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Grants

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ANNOUNCEMENT OF FEDERAL FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Federal Agency Name(s): National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Department of Commerce

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2017 Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Grants

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: NOAA-NMFS-HCPO-2017-2005156

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 11.463, Habitat Conservation

Dates: Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM EST on March 23, 2017. Use of a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted.

Funding Opportunity Description: The principal objective of the NMFS Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration solicitation is to support fish habitat restoration projects that use an ecosystem-based approach to foster species recovery and increase fish populations. Proposals submitted under this solicitation will be primarily evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate how the proposed habitat restoration actions will help recover threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (hereafter, Listed Species), especially species identified by NMFS as “Species in the Spotlight” (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/05/05_14_15species_in_the_spotlight.html) and sustain or help rebuild fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species). Successful proposals will 1) identify a habitat-based issue/concern limiting the recovery or sustainability of one or more species targeted by the proposed restoration action; 2) describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground habitat restoration project(s) to be undertaken to resolve the issue/concern and; 3) describe the project(s)’ expected outcomes and measurable impact on the project’s target species and their ecosystem.

Proposals selected for funding through this solicitation will be funded through cooperative agreements. One year or multi-year awards up to three funding years will be considered, and additional releases of funds may be used to fund selected proposals through FY19 without further competition. NOAA anticipates typical federal funding awards will range from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million over one to three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than \$100,000 or more than \$4 million over three years. NOAA anticipates up to

\$5 million will be available under this FFO in FY17. Funds will be administered by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA Restoration Center. Awards are dependent upon the amount of funds Congress makes available to NOAA for this purpose in the FY17-FY19 budgets.

FULL ANNOUNCEMENT TEXT

I. Funding Opportunity Description

A. Program Objective

The principal objective of the NMFS Community-based Restoration Program Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration solicitation is to support fish habitat restoration projects that use an ecosystem-based approach to foster species recovery and increase fish populations. Proposals submitted under this solicitation will be primarily evaluated based on their ability to demonstrate how the proposed habitat restoration actions will:

- help recover threatened and endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) (hereafter, Listed Species), especially species identified by NMFS as “Species in the Spotlight” (http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/stories/2015/05/05_14_15species_in_the_spotlight.html), and
- sustain or help rebuild fish stocks managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (hereafter, Managed Species).

Healthy habitat is critical to the recovery of protected resources and sustainability of fisheries. Under this solicitation, NOAA seeks proposals to restore habitats critical to Listed or Managed Species or their prey. Proposals benefitting coastal and marine species with a nexus to NMFS fishery management through the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Management Act, the Atlantic Striped Bass Conservation Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, Coral Reef Conservation Act and Species of Concern under NMFS will also be considered. NOAA Fisheries promotes a holistic, landscape-scale approach to resource management in a changing climate. Proposed habitat restoration actions may also increase the resilience of coastal communities by providing important ecosystem services such as protection from coastal flooding, extreme weather events, and coastal erosion.

Successful proposals will: 1) identify a habitat-based issue/concern limiting the recovery or sustainability of one or more species targeted by the proposed restoration action; 2) describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground habitat restoration project(s) to be undertaken to resolve the issue/concern and; 3) describe the project(s)’ expected outcomes and measurable impacts on the project’s target species and their ecosystem.

Applicants may request funds for an award period between one and three years. Applicants with multiple-year award requests should divide their funding request into logical allocations by consecutive years, based on their project implementation plan. For instance, a proposal

request might include design costs in year one and estimated construction costs needed in year two. Another example would be a proposal that requests construction costs for distinct sites in each of three years. If multiple restoration sites are included within one proposal, applicants are encouraged to develop a comprehensive approach for restoration, which links proposed sites and restoration activities by the habitat-based issue or concern or proposed target species and outcomes. Proposals that include multiple restoration sites should also fully describe the proposed restoration activity at each site within the project narrative section.

B. Program Priorities

Habitat restoration includes, but is not limited to activities that contribute to the return of degraded or altered marine, estuarine, coastal, and freshwater, diadromous fish habitats to functioning habitats or techniques that provide species access to their historic habitats. Primary habitat restoration methods that the NOAA Restoration Center supports include, but are not limited to: removal of in-stream migration barriers for diadromous fish; hydrologic reconnection of wetlands; coral reef restoration; and bivalve shellfish habitat restoration that includes some form of protection from harvest. High priority will be given to habitat restoration proposals that fulfill the following NOAA programmatic and regional goals:

Programmatic Goals

- Have the greatest potential to contribute to the recovery of Listed Species under NOAA jurisdiction, especially those species designated by NOAA as Species in the Spotlight, through habitat restoration project(s) that are consistent with priority habitat restoration actions identified in Recovery Plans and 5-Year Action Plans for Species in the Spotlight, where habitat availability and quality is limiting the recovery of the species;
- Have the greatest potential to enhance or sustain populations of Managed Species or their prey, specifically through project(s) that restore or enhance Essential Fish Habitat or address actions supported by Fishery Management Plans;
- Provide sustainable and lasting ecological benefits of regional or national significance for the species targeted by the project and its habitat. Projects that restore natural ecosystem function and processes such as dam removal projects will receive higher priority than projects that install structures that require maintenance, such as fish passage devices;

Regional Goals

- Restore habitat within NOAA Blueprint Habitat Focus Areas, where habitat restoration is

a key strategy in achieving the goals of the Habitat Focus Area (<http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/habitatblueprint/>);

-- Restore delta, tidal, floodplain, and riparian ecosystem function to habitat within the Puget Sound through hydrologic reconnection, removal of in-stream migration barriers, and other restoration actions that are aligned with the Puget Sound Action Agenda (www.psp.wa.gov/action_agenda_center.php) and salmon Recovery Plans for ESA-listed species, and demonstrate leverage and coordinated investment across federal and state agencies;

-- Restore tidal, floodplain, and riverine habitat along the Oregon coast through hydrologic reconnection and removal of in-stream migration barriers to support the recovery of ESA-listed Oregon Coast coho salmon, including restoration actions aligned with applicable Oregon coast coho strategic action plans;

-- Increase the amount of habitat accessible to diadromous species through dam and culvert removal projects in high priority watersheds in the Northeast, as identified by the Restoration Center's regional fish passage prioritization; more information on Northeast regional fish passage priority watersheds can be found here: <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>.

C. Program Authority

The Secretary of Commerce is authorized under the following statutes to provide grants and cooperative agreements for habitat restoration and conservation: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act 16 U.S.C. 661, as amended by the Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006, 16 U.S.C. 1891a; and Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1535.

II. Award Information

A. Funding Availability

One-year or multi-year awards up to three funding years will be considered, and additional releases of funds may be used to fund selected proposals through FY19 without further competition. NOAA anticipates typical federal funding awards will range from \$300,000 to \$1.5 million over one to three years. NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than \$100,000 or more than \$4 million over three years. NOAA anticipates up to \$5 million will be available under this FFO in FY17. Funds will be administered by the Community-based Restoration Program within the NOAA Restoration

Center.

Dependent on the level of funding made available by Congress, NOAA anticipates approximately \$10 million may be available over the next two years (FY18-FY19) to maintain selected awards.

The exact amount of funds that may be awarded will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Any funds provided to successful applicants for out-year funding requests will be determined by progress towards stated milestones and availability of funding at the discretion of the NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation and the NOAA Grants Management Division (GMD).

In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for application preparation costs if programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all top-ranked applications. The number of awards to be made as a result of this solicitation will depend on the number of eligible applications received, the amount of funds requested for habitat restoration, the merit and ranking of the applications, and the amount of funds made available by Congress in FY17 and subsequent fiscal years.

B. Project/Award Period

Applications should cover a period of performance between 12 and 36 months. NOAA anticipates that the period of performance for most awards will be for 36 months, but may award a project where the period of performance extends up to 48 months. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2017. Pre-award costs are generally unallowable; however, pre-award costs may be considered during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA Grants Management Division provides an award document is at the applicant's own risk.

Once funds are awarded in FY17, recipients of multi-year awards will not need to compete for funding in subsequent years. NOAA expects, but is not obligated, to provide additional funding to multi-year awards in subsequent years. Adding funds to multi-year awards is at the discretion of NOAA.

Permission to extend the period of performance beyond that stated in award documentation should be requested in writing at least 30 days in advance of an award's expiration date, as per NOAA Award Conditions.

C. Type of Funding Instrument

Selected applications will be funded through cooperative agreements, as described in 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.24, meaning that NOAA expects to be substantially involved in many aspects of the awards. Substantial involvement may include, but is not limited to, collaboration on the scope of work, providing assistance with technical aspects of the habitat restoration project, review and comment on design plans, review of procurement materials to the extent authorized by 2 C.F.R. Sec. 200.324, and tracking the progress towards the successful completion of the project.

III. Eligibility Information

A. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are institutions of higher education, non-profits, commercial (for profit) organizations, U.S. territories, and state, local and Native American tribal governments. Applicants must propose work in geographic areas that benefit species with a nexus to NOAA management, further detailed in Section III.C. Applications from federal agencies or employees of federal agencies will not be considered. Federal agencies are strongly encouraged to work with states, non-governmental organizations, municipal and county governments, and others that are eligible to apply.

B. Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement

There is no statutory matching requirement for this funding. NOAA typically leverages its federal funding with matching contributions from a broad range of sources in the public and private sectors to implement coastal and marine habitat restoration. To this end, applicants are encouraged to demonstrate partnerships and some portion of non-federal match (suggested at 1:1) with NOAA funds requested to implement the proposed project. Applications with less than 1:1 match will not be disqualified, however, applicants should note that cost sharing is an element considered in Evaluation Criterion #4 "Project Costs" (Section V.A.4.). Cost sharing will not be waived for Territories of the United States; the Omnibus Territories Act does not apply.

Federal sources cannot be considered for matching funds, but can be described in the budget narrative to demonstrate additional leverage and collaboration. Match to NOAA funds can come from a variety of public and private sources and can include third party in-kind goods and services and volunteer labor. Refer to 2 C.F.R. 200.306 for cost sharing or matching policies. Applicants are permitted to combine contributions from non-federal partners, as long as such contributions are not used to match any other federal funds and are available within the project period stated in the application. Applicants with approved indirect cost

rates planning to provide cost sharing may find it convenient to propose a portion or all of their indirect costs as match, since the valuation of such costs has already been federally approved and documentation is readily available. Refer to Section IV.F. "Funding Restrictions" for information on indirect costs.

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will be bound by the percentage of cost sharing reflected in the award document signed by NOAA's Grants Management Division, unless amended based on extenuating circumstances. NOAA is under no obligation to amend the matching contributions once agreed to by the recipient. Successful applicants should be prepared to carefully document matching contributions, including the overall number of volunteers and third party in-kind participation hours devoted to habitat restoration projects. Letters of commitment for any secured resources that will be used as match for an award under this solicitation should be submitted as an attachment to the application (see Section IV.B).

C. Other Criteria that Affect Eligibility

NOAA will not accept proposals with a federal funding request of less than \$100,000 or more than \$4 million over three years. Applications must be submitted by the due date and time provided in Section IV.D. Late applications will not be considered for funding. Submission time will be documented by electronic submission to Grants.gov, a U.S. Postal Service postmark, or a delivery service receipt. Information regarding electronic submission through Grants.gov is contained in Section IV.G. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. Applications submitted via the U.S. Postal Service must have an official postmark; private metered postmarks are not acceptable. Applications received later than five business days following the closing date will not be accepted. All applications MUST contain ALL required forms; if these forms are not signed via the www.Grants.gov application process, they MUST be signed in ink (SF-424, SF-424b, CD-511). Failure to submit signed forms shall result in disqualification from this competition. Project design plans may be submitted on CD, DVD, or USB drive, if a proposal is submitted in hard copy. The full proposal must arrive in one package, either through Grants.gov or hard copy.

Section III.A presents information distinguishing eligible versus ineligible organization types. Applications that propose projects in the Commonwealth and Territories of the United States, for this solicitation defined as American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, are eligible, but those in the Freely Associated States are not eligible for funding consideration. Proposals that solely benefit freshwater fish species or Listed Species under the jurisdiction of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service are not eligible. Projects in the Great Lakes region are not eligible under this solicitation as there are separate funding opportunities available for restoration projects in

the Great Lakes. Projects that focus on marine debris prevention and removal or acquisition of real property are also not eligible.

NOAA recognizes that water quality issues can impact Listed Species recovery and Managed Species sustainability. However, this program is intended to fund on-the-ground habitat restoration resulting in physical habitat modifications and beneficial ecological impacts. Proposals addressing only water quality improvement measures are not eligible. Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to, wastewater treatment plant upgrades, elimination of combined sewer outfalls, replacement of failing septic systems, and implementation of farm waste management plans.

Applicants should also note that the following activities will not be considered: (1) Activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by local, state or federal law; (2) activities that constitute restoration for natural resource damages under federal, state or local law; and (3) activities that are required by a separate consent decree, court order, statute or regulation.

IV. Application and Submission Information

A. Address to Request Application Package

Complete application packages, including required federal forms and instructions, can be found on www.Grants.gov. If a prospective applicant is having difficulty downloading the application forms from www.Grants.gov, contact www.Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov. Instructions for these forms are available at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions.html>.

B. Content and Form of Application

Applicants should apply through the www.Grants.gov website. A complete standard NOAA financial assistance application package should be submitted in accordance with the guidelines in this document. Each application must include the application forms from the SF-424 form family:

--Application for Federal Assistance: SF-424 (7/03 version or newer)

--Budget Information for Non-construction Programs: SF-424A (prior to award, an SF-424A for each year of funding will be required)

--Assurances for Non-construction Programs: SF-424B

--Certification Regarding Lobbying: CD-511

--Disclosure of Lobbying Activities: SF-LLL (if applicable)

In addition, NOAA recommends the following as part of a complete application package:

--Project summary (described below, 2 page limit);

--Project narrative (described below, 15 page limit);

--A data management plan (described below, 2 page limit);

--A detailed budget justification (described below, 6 page limit);

--Project design plans for proposals requesting funds for project implementation and construction (schematic drawings, NOT feasibility studies or watershed plans)

--Other relevant supporting materials (15 page limit) such as:

--A site location map such as a USGS topographic quadrangle map or aerial photo with site location(s) highlighted

--Brief curriculum vitae or resume for up to three (3) key personnel (maximum of 1 page per person) and any examples of projects similar in scope and nature that have been successfully completed by the project team;

--A letter documenting private owner or public land manager support of the project proposed for the owned site(s); and

--Any other relevant supporting materials such as letters of support (including those from adjoining landowners and those documenting financial and in-kind support), federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreements, monitoring plans, site photos, etc.

Applications submitted through the www.Grants.gov website should include a maximum of four (4) files (PDF files only) in addition to the Federal application forms:

1) Summary, narrative, and data management plan (not to exceed 19 pages total, as outlined above);

2) Budget Justification;

3) Project designs; and

4) Supplemental Information - all other attachments combined into one indexed file, such as maps, curriculum vitae, and support letters, not to exceed 15 pages. Page limits assume a 12-point font and 1-inch margins.

1. Project Summary (2 page limit):

--Applicant Organization

--Project Title

--Site Location - nearest town or watershed, and geographic coordinates

--Brief Project Description/Executive Summary: Briefly describe the activities to be accomplished with the requested funds including: 1) a habitat-based issue/concern limiting the recovery or sustainability of one or more species targeted by the proposed restoration action; 2) detailed actions and on-the-ground habitat restoration project(s) to be undertaken to resolve the issue/concern and; 3) the expected outcome of the project and measurable impact on the project's target species and ecosystem, including proposed evaluation techniques.

--Project Performance Measures and Outcomes -Number of acres to be restored or stream miles to be made accessible to diadromous fish through the proposed activities and any other anticipated long-term ecological and socioeconomic outcomes

--Project Time Line, including an Implementation Start Date, if applicable (not proposed award start date)

--Permits and Approvals - identify and list all consultations, permits, and regulatory approvals necessary for the proposed project(s) and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured)

--Land Owner - name and address (if privately owned) or public agency contact

--Amount of Funding Requested per year (if requesting a multi-year award)

--Total Federal Funds Requested & Non-Federal Match Anticipated – including the amount of Non-Federal Match that has been confirmed or secured.

--Overall Project Cost, including any leveraged funds beyond proposed match and federal funding request

2. Project Narrative (15 page limit):

The project narrative should closely follow the organization of the evaluation criteria (see Section V. A. Evaluation Criteria) for the application to receive a consistent review against competing applications. In general, proposals should 1) identify a habitat-based issue/concern limiting the recovery or sustainability of one or more species targeted by the proposed restoration action; 2) describe in detail the actions and on-the-ground habitat restoration project(s) to be undertaken to resolve the issue/concern and; 3) describe the project(s)' expected outcomes and measurable impact on the project's target species and ecosystem, including proposed evaluation techniques.

Applications for multi-year awards should identify annual/interim milestones that correspond to funding increments. As described in Section II.A, NOAA will consider progress towards identified milestones when making funding decisions for multi-year awards in subsequent years. Furthermore, if multiple restoration sites are included within one proposal, the habitat issue or target species should be linked across all proposed sites to achieve the overall proposal's expected outcome. Proposals that include multiple restoration sites should also fully describe the proposed restoration activity at each site within the project narrative section. If page limits are restrictive, focus the application on the technical aspects of the proposed actions and on those actions with highest priority funding needs. If you cannot describe all aspects of a multi-year or multi-project award within the recommended page limits, applicants should consider submitting more than one application.

The narrative should:

--succinctly describe the historic condition of the restoration site(s) and the habitat-based issue/concern that is the primary focus of the proposal;

-- describe any processes that have resulted in degradation of the habitat and how these processes have been abated to allow for successful restoration;

- identify one or more species targeted by the proposed habitat restoration and their historic and current status or population estimates;
- highlight how the proposed habitat restoration actions are consistent with, or linked to, ESA Recovery Plans, Species in the Spotlight 5-year Action Plans, Fishery Management Plans, or other fishery-related strategic planning or management documents;
- define the project's context within the ecosystem and how project planning and design incorporates an ecosystem-based approach;
- describe the extent to which the proposed project aligns with the stated Program Priorities (Section I.B);
- indicate any additional societal benefits, such as increased community or ecosystem resiliency, business opportunities, recreational opportunities, decreased safety hazards, or reduced maintenance costs that may result from the proposed habitat restoration; and
- describe the level of stakeholder and community support for the proposed habitat restoration effort as demonstrated by a diversity of partners and sponsorship, and whether or not the project has been put forward by common agreement or through a public planning process;

Additionally, detailed, technical information about the proposed restoration activities and site(s) should be included in the project narrative. For each restoration site, applicants should clearly identify the project phase(s) proposed (e.g. feasibility study, design, construction) and detail the implementation plan and proposed restoration techniques.

For applicants proposing feasibility and design activities, a detailed scope of services or tasks should be included in the proposal. Applicants should describe the overall habitat restoration goals of the feasibility and design activities, and how support for the proposed activity would catalyze subsequent on-the-ground restoration for species recovery and increased fish populations.

For applicants proposing construction, design plans, specifications, scope of work for services, and engineering opinions of cost or cost estimates (if available) should be included in the proposal. Project design plans should be included in the application in order for reviewers to comprehensively assess the technical merit of the proposed restoration action(s). Applicants should also describe how the proposed restoration design, methodology, and techniques account for, or provide for, resilience to extreme weather

events or adaptation to potential climate change impacts at the project site.

To protect the federal investment, the narrative should describe future management, beyond the award period, including mechanisms to protect, maintain, or sustain the restoration site(s) so the effects of the funded project(s) can benefit the target species and their habitat into the future. Proposed habitat restoration action(s) that are sustainable and provide lasting benefits for the species targeted by the project and its habitat are preferred and considered in Evaluation Criteria #2.d (see Section V.A). In particular, applicants proposing to install structures such as fish passage devices or tide gates as a component of the project should include discussion of an operation and management plan that specifies the entity responsible for the operation and maintenance of the structure(s) and how they will be operated and maintained throughout the life of the structure(s) to ensure lasting habitat benefits.

Applicants proposing new or modified tide gates should also describe measures that will be put in place to prevent filling of the flood storage area upstream of the proposed tide gate.

Applicants proposing to alter tidal exchange should also provide a hydrograph and/or other information explaining any tidal restriction(s) and projected conditions with restoration.

Applicants proposing to enhance existing tidal wetlands, including beneficial re-use of dredged material to increase substrate elevation to keep pace with sea level rise and subsidence effects, should provide information on the source of the dredge materials, the site-specific rate of sea-level rise and subsidence, target substrate elevation(s), and how the restored site is expected to keep pace with the rate of sea level rise and subsidence.

Applicants proposing to place plants or release animals into the environment should include the origin/source and regional genetic stock of the plant or animal, and describe the proximity to any existing or remnant sources of similar type in the area.

The project narrative should include a timeline with key milestones identified and detail how the project(s) will be completed within the specified time period. This includes identifying all consultation and permitting requirements and their status (e.g. not applied for, pending, secured), as well as a commitment to quickly provide information needed by NOAA to analyze project impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, see Section VI.B.2). For projects with NEPA documents completed or under development, please indicate the status and level of NEPA review (CE, EA, or EIS), lead Federal agency, contact information for the lead agency person, and where public copies of the document are available.

Proposals requesting funding for restoration implementation/construction activities should include a discrete monitoring plan and applicants should be willing to work with NOAA to adjust the monitoring plan, if necessary, to ensure that the proposed parameters are adequate and meaningful. All monitoring plans should propose sufficient, cost-effective

implementation monitoring. Implementation monitoring assesses whether the restoration action was carried out as designed and provides a basic level of effectiveness.

Implementation monitoring plans should: 1) include parameters that evaluate short-term structural changes at the project site(s) (e.g. as-built surveys), but may also include basic measures of effectiveness (e.g. presence/absence of target species); 2) propose pre-implementation data collection, when applicable; 3) include parameters with quantitative or clearly defined targets; and 4) include parameters with targets that can be evaluated within approximately one year post-implementation. Guidance on implementation monitoring for selected restoration types is available at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>.

NOAA will also consider proposals that include more in-depth, longer-term monitoring that addresses ecological effectiveness or restoration technique effectiveness of the Restoration Center's primary restoration methods: removal of in-stream migration barriers for diadromous fish; hydrologic reconnection of wetlands; coral reef restoration, and bivalve shellfish habitat restoration. NOAA may choose to provide additional funds to an award or increase the award period for successful applicants whose awards are identified as suitable for effectiveness monitoring.

3. Data Management Plan (2 pages)

Proposals submitted in response to this FFO should include a Data Management Plan of up to two pages. NOAA's Data and Publication Sharing Directive for NOAA Grants, Cooperative Agreements, and Contracts is available at

<https://nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php> The Data Management Plan should be aligned with the examples provided by NOAA at:

<http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. A typical plan should include descriptions of the types of environmental data and information expected to be created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible. The costs of data preparation, accessibility, or archiving may be included in the proposal budget unless otherwise stated in the Guidance. Accepted submission of data to the NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is one way to satisfy data sharing requirements; however, NCEI is not obligated to accept all submissions and may charge a fee, particularly for large or unusual datasets. Final Data Management Plans may be developed in coordination with NOAA as part of NOAA's substantial involvement, as described in Section II.C.

4. Budget Justification (6 pages):

The budget justification narrative must include a detailed breakdown by category of cost (object class) separated into federal and non-federal shares as they relate to specific aspects of the award, with a detailed narrative justification for both the federal and non-federal (if applicable) shares. The object classes should match those found in the SF-424A. If requesting funds for a multi-year proposal, award costs should be broken into annual/interim funding requests up to three years in duration, based on logical milestones in the implementation plan. For instance, a proposal request might include a request for a project's design costs in year one, estimated construction costs needed in year two, and estimated post-project monitoring costs in year three. Another example would be a project that requests construction costs for discrete sites in each year of a multi-year award. One, two, or three-year project proposals will be accepted.

If funding will be used to complete part of a larger project, a budget overview for the entire project to demonstrate how the NOAA request relates to the overall project budget and outcomes should be provided. If the project has been submitted for funding consideration elsewhere, the amount(s) requested or secured from other sources, and whether the funds requested/secured are federal or non-federal should be included. If the proposed project includes a monitoring component, the applicant should provide an estimate of all monitoring-related costs within the proposed budget.

Additional budget development guidance, including a budget narrative template, is available at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html> in the “Supplemental Instructions.” The NOAA Restoration Center and GMD staff will review budget information in recommended applications to determine if costs are allowable, allocable, reasonable, and realistic. The narrative budget justification should be sufficiently detailed to enable a clear understanding of the cost breakdown and calculations used to derive the line item subtotals in each object class of the SF-424A budget form. An SF-424A for each year of requested funding will be required prior to award, but not as part of the initial application.

C. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants should: (1) Be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) before submitting an application; (2) provide a valid Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number on an application; and (3) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal awarding agency. The federal awarding agency may not make a federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with

the requirements by the time the federal awarding agency is ready to make a federal award, the federal awarding agency may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a federal award to another applicant.

Applicants should allow a minimum of five days to complete the SAM registration; registration is required only once but must be periodically renewed. Applicants can receive a DUNS number at no cost by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>. Your organization's Employer Identification Number (EIN) will be needed on the application form.

D. Submission Dates and Times

Applications must be postmarked, provided to a delivery service, or received by www.Grants.gov by 11:59 PM Eastern Time on March 23, 2017. The time the application was provided to a delivery service must be documented with a receipt. No facsimile or electronic mail applications will be accepted. See Section III.C for more information.

E. Intergovernmental Review

Applications submitted under the FFO are subject to the provisions of Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs." Any applicant submitting an application for funding is required to complete item 19 on SF-424 regarding clearance by the State Single Point of Contact (SPOC). To find out about and comply with a State's process under Executive Order 12372, the names, addresses and phone numbers of participating SPOC's are listed on the Office of Management and Budget's home page at: http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants_spoc.

F. Funding Restrictions

Pre-award costs are generally unallowable in this program, however pre-award costs may be considered and discussed during pre-award negotiations between the applicant and NOAA representatives. Incurring pre-award costs before the NOAA GMD provides an award document (generally via NOAA Grants Online on Form CD-450) is at the applicant's own risk. The earliest date for receipt of awards for this funding opportunity is anticipated to be October 1, 2017.

The budget may include indirect (facilities & administrative [F&A]) costs if the applicant has an established indirect cost rate with the federal government. As defined at 2 C.F.R. § 200.56, indirect (F&A) costs are incurred for a common or joint purpose benefitting more than one cost objective, and not readily assignable to the cost objectives specifically

benefitted, without effort disproportionate to the results achieved (e.g., lights, rent, water, and insurance). A copy of the current, approved negotiated indirect (F&A) cost agreement with the federal government should be included with the application. In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.414(f), an applicant that has never received a negotiated indirect cost rate, may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), describe all costs as direct costs in the budget narrative, or establish a new rate through the Department of Commerce by contacting Lamar Revis, Grants Officer at NOAA Grants Management Division, 1325 East-West Highway, 9th Floor, Silver Spring, MD 20910, or lamar.revis@noaa.gov. Applicants may elect to propose all or part of indirect costs as cost sharing.

G. Other Submission Requirements

Applicants should submit applications electronically through www.Grants.gov. Users of Grants.gov will be able to create an online application workspace, or download a copy of the application package, complete it off line, and then submit the application via the Grants.gov site. If an applicant has problems accessing the online workspace or downloading the application forms from Grants.gov, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or support@Grants.gov.

We highly recommend that applicants do not wait until the application deadline to begin the application process through Grants.gov, as registration with SAM and DUNS are required, as described in Section IV.C.

After electronic submission of the application, applicants will receive an automatic acknowledgment from Grants.gov that contains a Grants.gov tracking number. Applications submitted through Grants.gov will be accompanied by THREE automated responses (the first confirms receipt; the second confirms that the submission is acceptable and timely; and the third validates that the application has been forwarded to NOAA for further processing). If all notifications are not received, applicants should follow up with both the Grants.gov help desk and the NOAA Restoration Center to confirm NOAA receipt of the complete submission.

PLEASE NOTE: It may take Grants.gov up to two business days to validate or reject the application. Please keep this in mind in developing your submission timeline. Applicants should allow themselves sufficient time to submit their application to Grants.gov in advance of the deadline to ensure applications have been submitted successfully, as waivers of the submission deadline will not be granted. Late applications will not be accepted.

If an applicant is unable to use the preferred submission method (Grants.gov) or is unsure

about the success of their submission to Grants.gov, a signed hard copy application must be postmarked, or provided to a delivery service and documented with a receipt, by the deadline under "Submission Dates and Times" in Section IV.D and sent to: NOAA Restoration Center, NOAA Fisheries, 1315 East West Highway, Rm. 14853, Silver Spring, MD 20910. ATTN: FY 2017 Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Grants. Mandatory requirements regarding signatures and the format of hard copy applications are described in Section III.C.

V. Application Review Information

A. Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0 to 100 points based on the following five standard NOAA evaluation criteria and respective weights specified below. Applications that best address these criteria will be most competitive.

1. Importance and Applicability (32 points): This criterion ascertains whether there is intrinsic value in the proposed work and/or relevance to NOAA, federal, regional, state or local activities. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Benefits to NOAA Resources- How great is the potential of the proposed actions to restore or enhance habitat for the benefit of: 1) species listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) under NOAA jurisdiction, especially those designated by NOAA as "Species in the Spotlight"; or 2) species managed by NOAA under the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act? This includes projects benefitting Critical Habitat, Essential Fish Habitat, and projects that benefit ESA or MSA species through ecosystem improvements such as restoring habitat for forage fish. (10 points)

(b) Program Priorities- To what extent do the proposed restoration actions align with the priorities described in Section I.B. Program Priorities? (6 points)

(c) Issue Identification- To what extent does the proposal describe the habitat issue limiting recovery or sustainability of the species targeted by the restoration project, the state of the species' habitat/populations within the watershed/affected area, and propose restoration actions that will have an impact on the species (e.g. contribute to the recovery or sustainability of fish populations)? (6 points)

(d) Tangible Results- To what extent does the proposed project(s) contribute to NOAA's mission to protect and restore marine and coastal habitats by delivering tangible, specific results that are measurable and relevant to NOAA performance measures such as 1) acres restored, 2) stream miles opened for fish passage, or 3) similar outputs (e.g. number of corals

transplanted) that directly result from the project(s)? (5 points)

(e) Multiple Benefits- To what extent will the proposed project(s) increase ecosystem and community resiliency, and yield environmentally compatible socio-economic benefits, such as increased business opportunities, public community revitalization, recreational opportunities, reduced safety hazards, or reduced maintenance costs? (5 points)

2. Technical/Scientific Merit (30 points): This criterion assesses whether the restoration activity or approach is technically sound, if the methods are appropriate, and whether there are clear goals and objectives. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the extent to which the applicant has described a realistic and thorough implementation plan that includes:

(a) Project Feasibility and Methodology - To what extent is the proposed project(s) feasible from a biological and engineering perspective, including whether the proposed approach is technically sound, safe for the public, and uses appropriate methods and personnel? To what extent does the proposal describe the susceptibility of the project site to climate change impacts and how the proposed restoration methodology and design provides for resilience to extreme weather events and adaptation to potential climate change impacts anticipated at the project site? (8 points)

(b) Project Timeline- To what extent does the proposal completely describe the restoration actions, the current status of the project (e.g. 60% design plans complete), permitting and environmental compliance status, key milestones throughout the course of the project(s), and a realistic time frame (within the 1-3 year award period) to reach those milestones? A complete project description should include all phases of the restoration from initial feasibility study through design, permitting, construction, performance monitoring, operation and/or maintenance. If the proposal is a feasibility study or design project only, to what extent does the proposal completely describe the feasibility or design actions, key milestones, and a realistic timeframe? (8 points)

(c) Measurable Goals- To what extent will the project be able to report progress towards broad goals and measure near-term implementation success, including implementation (NOAA RC Tier 1) monitoring for applicable project types? Does the proposal also offer an opportunity for insightful ecological and technical effectiveness monitoring (NOAA RC Tier 2)? Further guidance is provided in “Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring” at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. (5 points)

(d) Sustainability- How great is the potential of the restoration effort to be sustainable and

provide lasting benefits of regional or national significance for the species targeted by the project and its habitat? Is there evidence that the applicant has chosen the most self-sustaining restoration technique that accomplishes the project's goals and/or evidence that habitat impacts will not re-occur? (5 points)

(e) Landowner Support- Is there substantiated land owner/land manager support and commitment to the project documented within the application (e.g. a support letter)? (2 points)

(f) Public Access to Data- Has the proposal included a Data Management Plan, including descriptions of the types of environmental data and information created during the course of the project; the tentative date by which data will be shared; the standards to be used for data/metadata format and content; methods for providing data access; approximate total volume of data to be collected; and prior experience in making such data accessible? (2 points)

3. Overall Qualifications of Applicant (10 points): This criterion ascertains whether the applicant possesses the necessary education, experience, training, facilities, and administrative resources to support the proposed award. For this competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following (as demonstrated by attached resumes, past project experience, and accomplishments of the key technical and financial staff):

(a) Restoration and Conservation Background- Does the applicant have the capacity and knowledge to conduct the scope and scale of the proposed work, as indicated by the qualifications and past experience of the project leaders and/or partners in designing, implementing and effectively managing and overseeing projects that restore marine and coastal habitats? (6 points)

(b) Management Capacity- Does the applicant describe the necessary experience, facilities, equipment and administrative resources available to successfully fulfill the responsibilities associated with managing a federal grant award? (4 points)

4. Project Costs (20 points): This criterion evaluates the budget to determine if it is realistic and commensurate with the project(s) needs and time-frame. For this competition, applications will be evaluated on the following:

(a) Cost-benefit Comparison- Has the applicant demonstrated that a significant benefit will be generated at a reasonable cost, based on the applicant's stated objectives and time frame? If funds are requested for partial support of a larger project or for a project with multiple

sites or phases, the proposal should include the full project budget and/or a budget for each site or project phase to place the funding request in spatial and temporal context. Multi-year or multi-phase award requests should also include annual/interim milestones that correspond to logical funding request increments. (5 points)

(b) Budget Detail - Has the applicant demonstrated a realistic understanding of restoration costs by providing a budget (broken down by SF424A object classes) that provides sufficient detail and credible cost estimates and justifications for both federal and non-federal shares? (5 points)

(c) Funding Priorities - Does the proposed budget direct the majority of funds, including funds for salaries, to implement the project (i.e. project development/feasibility, design, or implementation and monitoring), compared to the percentage used for general program support including administration? (5 points)

(d) Cost-sharing- To what extent will the applicant leverage the federal investment through non-federal matching contributions, including the amount of cash match available and amount of secured match to support the proposed restoration activities? NOAA desires cost sharing to leverage funding and further encourage partnership among government, industry, and academia (any applicant proposing at least 1:1 confirmed non-federal match would receive the full 5 points for this criterion). (5 points)

5. Outreach and Education (8 points): NOAA assesses whether the project is based on solid community support and the award can deliver a focused and effective outreach strategy regarding NOAA's mission to protect the nation's natural resources through coastal habitat restoration. For the NOAA Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration Project Grants competition, applications will be evaluated based on the following:

(a) Community Involvement- Does the proposed project(s) include a wide base of stakeholder and community support that demonstrates the restoration effort has been put forward by common agreement through inclusion in a public planning process? To what degree does the project(s) have community support as demonstrated by a diversity of partners and/or sponsorship (letters of support, confirmed contributions) from local entities, state and local governments, and/or members of Congress? (5 points)

(b) Information Dissemination- Does the proposal include public outreach as it relates to the proposed restoration, including plans to disseminate information on: 1) restoration goals and results; 2) sources of funding and other support provided, such as the involvement of partners; and 3) the potential for the proposed restoration to encourage future restoration and

protection of marine and coastal habitats or complement other local restoration or conservation activities? (3 points)

B. Review and Selection Process

Applications will undergo an initial administrative screening to determine if they are eligible and complete. NOAA, in its sole discretion, may continue the review process for applications with non-substantive issues that may be easily rectified or cured. Applications are screened to ensure that they were received by the deadline date (see Section IV. C. Submission Dates and Times); the applicant is eligible to apply; and includes a project summary, project description, budget, and supporting documentation as outlined in Section IV.B. Content and Form of Application. NOAA does not have to screen applications before the submission deadline in order to identify deficiencies that would cause the application to be rejected or receive a poor evaluation. However, if deficiencies are identified by NOAA or the applicant, the applicant may correct any deficiencies in their application before the deadline. After the deadline, the application must remain as submitted; no changes can be made to it.

Eligible applications will undergo a technical review, ranking, and selection process to determine how well they meet the program priorities and evaluation criteria of this solicitation and the mission and goals of NOAA.

Eligible applications will be evaluated by three or more merit reviewers as part of a technical review based on the Evaluation Criteria listed above. After the technical review, a panel may meet to make final recommendations to the Selecting Official (SO) regarding which proposals best meet the program objectives and priorities (Sections I.A. and I.B.). The panel will be comprised of federal employees and may convene in person or by teleconference, video conference, or other electronic means to discuss applications.

If convened, the panel will be presented with the top-ranked applications, per the results of the technical review, technical review scores, and comments for each application. The panel will rate all top-ranked proposals on the following scale:

3- Excellent-- Application exceptionally addresses program priorities outlined in Sections I.A. and I.B., and was highly responsive to Evaluation Criteria;

2-Good-- Application partially addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A. and I.B. and was strongly responsive to Evaluation Criteria; or

1-Fair-- Application marginally addresses program priorities outlined in Section I.A. and

I.B. and was moderately responsive to Evaluation Criteria.

This rating will be presented to the SO for funding consideration and will be the primary consideration of the SO in deciding which applications will be recommended to the NOAA GMD, pending the application of selection factors below.

C. Selection Factors

The SO anticipates recommending applications for funding in rank order unless an application is justified to be selected out of rank order based upon one or more of the following selection factors:

- (1) Availability of funding;
- (2) Balance/distribution of funds: a) by geographic area, b) by type of institutions, c) by type of partners, d) by research areas; or e) by project types;
- (3) Whether this project duplicates other projects funded or considered for funding by NOAA or other federal agencies;
- (4) Program priorities and policy factors set out in section I.A. and I.B.;
- (5) An applicant's prior award performance;
- (6) Partnerships and/or participation of targeted groups; and
- (7) Adequacy of information necessary for NOAA staff to make a NEPA determination and draft necessary documentation before recommendations for funding are made to the NOAA GMD.

Hence, awards may not necessarily be made to the highest-scored applications. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified that their application was not among those recommended for funding. Unsuccessful applications submitted in hard copy will be kept on file in accordance with NOAA records requirements and then destroyed.

NOAA may select all, some, or none of the applications, or part of any application, ask applicants to work together or combine projects, defer applications to the future, or reallocate funds to different funding categories, to the extent authorized. Applicants may be asked to modify objectives, work plans or budgets, and provide supplemental information required by the agency prior to the award. The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the

final scope of activities, the project duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA Grants Office, and NOAA program staff.

In addition, the NOAA Grants Officer will review financial and grants administration aspects of a proposed award, including conducting an assessment of the risk posed by the applicant in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.205. NOAA is required to review and consider any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM (currently FAPIIS) (see 41 U.S.C. 2313). An applicant, at its option, may review information in the designated integrity and performance systems accessible through SAM and comment on any information about itself that a Federal awarding agency previously entered and is currently in the designated integrity and performance system accessible through SAM. NOAA will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in §200.205 Federal awarding agency review of risk posed by applicants.

In addition to reviewing repositories of government-wide eligibility, qualifications or financial integrity information, the risk assessment conducted by NOAA may consider items such as the financial stability of an applicant, quality of the applicant's management systems, an applicant's history of performance, previous audit reports and audit findings concerning the applicant and the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on non-federal entities. Applicants should be in compliance with the terms of any existing NOAA grants or cooperative agreements and otherwise eligible to receive federal awards, or make arrangements satisfactory to the Grants Officer, to be considered for funding under this competition. All reports due should be received and any concerns raised by the agency should be addressed in a timely fashion in order to receive a new award. Upon review of these factors, if appropriate, specific award conditions that respond to the degree of risk may be applied by the NOAA Grants Officer pursuant to 2 C.F.R. 200.207. In addition, NOAA reserves the right to reject an application in its entirety where information is uncovered that raises a significant risk with respect to the responsibility or suitability of an applicant. The final approval of selected applications and issuance of awards will be by the NOAA Grants Officer. The award decision of the Grants Officer is final and there is no right of appeal.

D. Anticipated Announcement and Award Dates

NOAA will attempt to notify highly-ranked applicants by June 30, 2017. The earliest anticipated start date for awards will be October 1, 2017. Applicants that initiate award

activities in anticipation of federal funding do so at their own risk, and are advised not to begin award-related work until a notice of award is received electronically from the NOAA GMD in Grants Online, NOAA's online financial assistance management system.

VI. Award Administration Information

A. Award Notices

The exact amount of funds to be awarded, the final scope of activities including monitoring, the award duration, and specific NOAA cooperative involvement with the activities of each Coastal and Marine Habitat Restoration cooperative agreement award will be determined in pre-award negotiations among the applicant, the NOAA GMD, and NOAA staff that will administer these restoration awards.

The official notice of award is the Standard Form CD-450, Financial Assistance Award, issued by the NOAA Grants Officer electronically through NOAA's Grants Online system. The authorizing document, the CD-450 award cover page, is provided to the appropriate business office of the recipient organization. It is available at <http://go.usa.gov/SNMR>. The Internet Explorer browser should be used with Grants Online.

B. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

1. The Department of Commerce Pre-Award Notification Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements contained in the Federal Register notice of December 30, 2014 (79 FR 78390), are applicable to this solicitation. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXC7A>.

2. Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements at 2 C.F.R. 200, implemented by the Department of Commerce at 2 C.F.R. 1327.101, apply to awards in this program. Refer to <http://go.usa.gov/cXCJQ>.

3. The Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions will apply to awards in this program. A current version of this document is available at <http://go.usa.gov/hKbj>. In addition, award documents provided by NOAA may contain special award conditions, including those limiting the use of funds for compliance activities such as outstanding environmental compliance requirements, which will be applied on a case-by-case basis, and requirements for submitting progress reports. These award conditions are subject to change prior to award but examples are provided at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>.

4. NEPA Requirements- NOAA must analyze the potential environmental impacts for

individual projects as required by NEPA. Detailed information on NOAA compliance with NEPA can be found at the following NOAA NEPA website, <http://www.nepa.noaa.gov/>, including NOAA Administrative Order 216-6 for NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) implementation regulations. Consequently, as part of an applicant's package, and under the description of their activities, applicants are required to provide detailed information on the activities to be conducted, safety concerns, locations, sites, species and habitat to be affected, possible construction activities, and any environmental concerns that may exist (e.g. the use and disposal of hazardous or toxic chemicals, introduction of non-indigenous species, impacts to endangered and threatened species, aquaculture projects, and impacts to coral reef systems).

Applicants are encouraged to consult with NOAA as early as possible on proposed projects to discuss NEPA considerations, and should review the restoration-specific environmental compliance documents available at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html>. Funds will not be released until NOAA completes the requisite NEPA analysis and documentation. Funds may be withheld by the GMD under a special award condition requiring the recipient to submit additional environmental law compliance information sufficient to enable NOAA to make an assessment of impacts that the award may have on the environment.

Applicants proposing activities that cannot be categorically excluded from further NEPA analysis, that are not covered by existing NOAA programmatic NEPA documents, or whose activities are not covered under another agency's NEPA compliance procedures, which can be analyzed and adopted by NOAA, will be informed after the technical review stage. Such applicants may be requested to assist in the preparation of an EA prior to an award being made, or provide for NOAA review a copy of an EA/EIS that covers proposed activities if one exists. Awardees will be required to cooperate with NOAA in identifying feasible measures to reduce or avoid any identified adverse environmental impacts of their proposed sub-award or sub-contract projects, especially for projects requiring NOAA to consult under the ESA. Failure to agree to do so shall be grounds for not awarding funds or for terminating an award.

5. NOAA's Data Sharing Policy- Environmental data and information collected and/or created under NOAA grants/ cooperative agreements must be made visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users, free of charge or at minimal cost, in a timely manner (typically no later than two (2) years after the data are collected or created), except where limited by law, regulation, policy or security requirements. The Data/Information Sharing Plan (and any subsequent revisions or updates) must be made publicly available at the time of award and, thereafter, will be posted with the published data. Failing to share

environmental data and information in accordance with the submitted Data/Information Sharing Plan may lead to disallowed costs and be considered by NOAA when making future award decisions.

More information about the Data Sharing Policy is available on NOAA's Environmental Data Management Committee website at: www.nosc.noaa.gov/EDMC/PD.DSP.php

6. Certifications Regarding Tax Liability and Felony Criminal Convictions- When applicable under appropriations law, NOAA will provide certain applicants a form to be completed by the applicant's authorized representative making a certification regarding Federally-assessed unpaid or delinquent tax liability or recent felony criminal convictions under any Federal law.

7. Limitation of Liability- Funding for programs listed in this notice is contingent upon the availability of Federal appropriations. Applicants are hereby given notice that funds may not yet have been appropriated for the programs listed in this notice. In no event will NOAA or the Department of Commerce be responsible for proposal preparation costs if these programs fail to receive funding or are cancelled because of other agency priorities. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Publication of this announcement does not oblige NOAA to award any specific project or to obligate any available funds. Recipients and sub-recipients are subject to all Federal laws and agency policies, regulations and procedures applicable to Federal financial assistance awards.

C. Reporting

Award recipients will be required to submit financial and performance (technical) reports in accordance with 2 C.F.R. 200.327-329 and the Department of Commerce Financial Assistance Standard Terms and Conditions. Progress reports shall use the NOAA Restoration Center's progress report narrative format and form approved by OMB under control number 0648 0472. This form will be provided to awardees by the NOAA Federal Program Officer. In addition, award recipients proposing multiple site locations may be required to complete individual reports for each site, or provide a project/site list including status and expenditures.

Narrative progress reports shall be due on the same fiscal year schedule as financial reports (Oct. 30 and April 30) covering April 1-September 30 and October 1-March 31, respectively. A comprehensive final report covering all activities during the award period is required and must be received by NOAA within 90 days after the end date of this award.

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act 31 U.S.C. 6106 Note, includes a requirement for awardees of applicable federal grants to report information about first-tier subawards and executive compensation under federal assistance awards. All awardees of applicable grants and cooperative agreements are required to report to the Federal Subaward Reporting System (FSRS) available at www.FSRS.gov on all subawards of \$25,000 and over.

VII. Agency Contacts

Supplemental Guidance regarding application writing, a checklist to submit a complete application, and FAQs about this FFO can be found at <http://www.habitat.noaa.gov/funding/applicantresources.html> and, respectively. For further information contact Rina Studds at (301) 427-8651, or by e-mail at Rina.Studds@noaa.gov. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NOAA Restoration Center staff before submitting an application to discuss their NOAA project ideas with respect to technical merit and NOAA's objectives. NOAA will make every effort to respond to prospective applicants on a first come, first served basis. These discussions will not include review of draft proposals or site visits during the application period.

VIII. Other Information

Funds awarded cannot necessarily pay for all the costs that the recipient might incur in the course of carrying out an award. Generally, costs that are allowable include salaries, equipment and supplies, as long as these are "necessary and reasonable" specifically for the purpose of the award. Allowable costs are determined by reference to the OMB Uniform Guidance at 2 C.F.R. Part 200, codified by the Department of Commerce at 1327.101. All cost reimbursement sub-awards (e.g. subgrants, subcontracts) are subject to those federal cost principles applicable to the particular type of organization concerned.

Applications submitted in response to this FFO may be subject to requests for release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. § 552). In the event that an application contains information or data that the applicant deems to be confidential commercial information which is exempt from disclosure under FOIA, that information should be identified, bracketed, and marked as Privileged, Confidential, Commercial or Financial Information. Based on these markings, the confidentiality of the contents of those pages will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Department of Commerce regulations implementing FOIA are found at 15 C.F.R. Part 4, Public Information. These regulations set forth rules for the Department regarding making requested materials, information, and records publicly available under the FOIA.